

Leicester, Monday June 23. 1845.

My dear Sir,

Ever since Anniversary Week I believe not a day has passed but I have thought of you, and wished & designed to write to you. But calls have been urgent, and, alas! time has fled. I am hoping to get ~~this~~ this ready to send to Burton tomorrow, to go in a parcel which Mother, as she informs me, is making up for you. She sent me your letter to her. I rejoice that you like Syracuse so much, and are so busy in good works - I doubt not with good results. - I may speak here of what you say about me. I trust Utica will have, soon, a Society, and a Minister of our faith who shall be stirring, influential & successful. No such post as that, I am persuaded, can I ever fill to good purpose; and where a man wants faith in himself, as to a certain end, there exists a want which nothing else can make up. I cannot enough mingle with other people, or find a real pleasure in doing it. I do not like it, for I find I cannot do it, to good purpose. You can - and there's a difference, and a mighty one between us. You can go among other people, of every description, and enjoy it, & communicate pleasure & benefit. It is not that I cannot go among the poorer & less favored people. I go among them quite as often, with quite as much satisfaction, and generally speaking with more, than ~~with~~ among others. - But I'll stop here on this subject; for it does no good to creak, and least of all would



I occupy your time with my difficulties, of any sort, when you have so much else, that is better, to attend to.

I presume you will hardly feel pleased to learn that I have determined to continue in Leicester — for the present, at least. I thought I could not do otherwise, under the circumstances. These were, briefly, as follows: I need not detail to you the conduct of 2 or 3 prominent men in my Society, on account of my determination not to be gagged. You know what it was; or, if you never had heard a word of it before, you would be at no loss to comprehend what it was, for you have had experience of these things, fourfold of mine. Meditating on these things through the winter, in all their connexions & relations, I at length decided to ask a dissolution — which I did, about the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. This letter caused, I found, great regret — I may say, general sorrow. Some were deeply grieved; and expressed themselves, in ~~such~~ <sup>such</sup> ways as came to my ears, so as I could not but feel gratified, and ~~much~~ convinced that I had the warmest friends, if I also had some enemies. The Society had a meeting, which was well attended, and my letter (asking a dissolution, & resigning my office) was laid before them. They passed a vote 'Unanimously expressing their wish that the relation between myself & the Society might not be dissolved'. Capt. Southgate was present at the meeting — professed great regard & confidence in me — virtually pledged himself not to make any more trouble for the Society — and was himself the one that proposed the above-named vote. All the ~~other~~ members of



the Society, who had not been present at the meeting, were seen and inquired of, and every one expressed concurrence in the vote, above mentioned. A Committee of 5 men was appointed to wait upon me, & inform me of the vote, &c. &c. - I told them I would give them an answer, in writing - which I did the following week. In this 2<sup>d</sup> letter, I withdrew my request for a dismission, and consented to comply with their unanimous wishes. I spoke decisively of the freedom - in all respects - to which as a man and a minister I was entitled, leaving no room for any future misunderstanding on that point. - These two letters, I should like to have you see; and hope, some day, to show them to you. Not that they are anything remarkable, but that you may see the ground I took. - Now you will not think me such a simpleton as to place any great reliance upon Capt. Southgate's promise, or his present good humour & apparent friendliness. I do not suspect him of the least intent to deceive me in his present professions & promises. But I know that he does, not know himself; I know there is no security that I shall not grievously offend him in 3 months; and as I do not propose to make it any part of my moral code to abstain from everything, in speech and act, which may be displeasing to him (or to any other son of a woman) I cannot but see that the present smooth surface may soon become ruffled - so far as he is concerned.



Nevertheless, here I am - re-instated in my post; and, so far as the confidence & good-will of my Society is concerned, stand as strongly as any man need wish. But I find it very hard working here. Our numbers are small. The opposition to us - whatever it is - I care not a straw for. It is a good thing for any body to be opposed. Knowledge and virtue come through struggling; and nobody can know whether he believes any truth, till his faith in it is ~~tested~~ tested strongly. While swimming with the current of the majority, how can any man know that he believes in God, or in Christ, or in the Gospel?

'Tis when our faith is sharply tried,  
We find that we are learners yet.'

I regret the smallness of our numbers most for this reason, - that our people are, on that account, less willing to pursue an independent course, but yield too readily, in ordinary circumstances and as to prevailing customs, to the tone of feeling and the course of action about them.

I must quit that subject. Just before Anniversary week, I received an invitation from ~~the~~ Parish Committee at Lexington to supply their pulpit for them the two Sundays preceding & following the Anniversaries. Not a word was said more than that - a simple request to supply those 2 Sundays. I saw no reason for declining it - was very glad of an opportunity to preach those 2 days so near the City, and so agreed at once to supply. I did so. I had a very pleasant time there



I stopped at the house of your old friends - the Davises, and found them kindly & pleasant people. They talked a deal about you & your family. I found a Congregation, goodly in appearance and in point of numbers; and, so far as I could judge, well-disposed to hear me. From ~~what~~ a few words Mr. Muzzey said to me (at leaving L., the 2<sup>d</sup> Sunday) I inferred they were determined not to be in haste as to inviting a pastor, but to hear ~~different~~ persons for some time yet. I understood him, however, to say that they hoped to settle a minister, before they did anything about a new Meetinghouse.

As to Anniversary Week - the time would fail me to tell of Conventions - Conferences - Prayer Meetings - Discussions, and the good things & of foolish to which I listened. But I must say a few words to you respecting the meeting <sup>of ministers</sup> called by C. Stetson <sup>& others</sup> to discuss their duties touching Slavery. Some account of the first meeting at Ritchie Hall you have seen in the "Chr. World". In a subsequent no. of the "World", I gave a brief account of ~~the~~ adjourned & closing meeting, held at F. T. Gray's Vestry - principally speaking of a speech of Mr. Gannett's, &c. You have ~~doubtless~~ probably seen this also. If not, I wish you would look at it. It has also appeared in the N. A. S. Standard, of June 19<sup>th</sup>. Among other replies to Mr. Gannett's most extraordinary speech (of which my account in the "World" gives but a very inadequate idea) I made one, on certain points; and I was moved to make it somewhat personal. It is of this that I wish, chiefly, now to write you; for you are concerned in it; and you will probably think I should



have written you about it earlier. Indeed I think so myself; and wished & meant to do so, — but — I have not so done.

I referred to Mr. G.'s position — he being present — that the South should, and must take it for granted that Northern Sentiment was Antislavery, & that therefore there was no need for a public and united expression of our opinion on Slavery. I asked him how he could take that position? how he could suppose that the South ~~thought~~<sup>could or</sup> would so think of us, when, (as had been repeatedly referred to in the discussion) they were constantly seeing men coming among them from Northern States — from the midst of Northern influences, from under Northern pulpits, and becoming Slave-buyers, Slave-owners, & among the noisiest apologists & defenders of the Institution; — when, too, they found that some of the most ready & keen apologists for the lawfulness, nay rightfulness (in God's sight), of Slavery, were Northern ministers & Doctors of Divinity; — how, I asked, could he think so, when a venerated brother of our own faith and a faithful Antislavery man, now no longer on earth, could not pray for the Slave in the pulpit of Federal Street Meetinghouse, without exciting the anger & rage of that Society, & inducing some of the influential among them to say he should never preach there again; when that same pulpit <sup>& house</sup> ~~were~~ deliberately ~~closed~~ refused to be opened, when I asked for the purpose of speaking the Eulogy of that same brother <sup>minister</sup>, and that Servant of God, ~~when~~ by a sudden & awful Casuality ~~he was~~ taken away! — When I



had reached this point, Mr. Sannett rose, quite excited, and said he must correct me, or something to that effect. He said, as to the first matter I had mentioned, relative to Federal St. Pulpit, that was the first time he had ever heard of it. I told him it was a matter, I supposed, of notoriety. I had heard, ~~xxx~~, and had seen it publicly stated in print, & never had known it to be called in question, that Dr. Follen once prayed there for the unhappy Slave "in chains of iron & in chains of gold" - and that, in consequence of it, great indignation & wrath against him were <sup>expressed</sup> stirred up. I added that I wished not to enter into any dispute with him on the subject. (then, said he, you ought not to bring up such a matter here.) - ~~for~~ I stated only what I believed to be a matter of fact. [I understood him to add that he did not believe it. I know I have seen it in print; I think in some of Mrs. Child's writings, but cannot ~~now~~ put my finger on the place, and have no reference to it.] As to the other matter, of the refusal of the Church for Dr. Follen's Eulogy, he said he entirely approved of the course taken by the Committee in that instance, that it was not to be expected they would open their house to be used for the delivery, under cover of a eulogy of the dead, of a "political disquisition" - he was sorry so to speak of the gentleman - S. J. May - who gave that Eulogy, &c. &c.

I briefly replied as follows: "I would ask Mr. Sannett to tell us how that Committee knew, what right or reason they had to suppose, that a "political disquisition" was to be given on that occasion? and farther, if any one here present supposes Samuel J. May capable of using such



an occasion for the delivery of a "political disquisition"; I think they owe him the justice of recurring to that Eulogy - for it is in print - and satisfying themselves as to its Character. For myself" I concluded "I had read the Eulogy - several years since, indeed - but I had no recollection of anything in it, that could <sup>justify</sup> ~~bring upon it~~ the description which Mr. Saunett had given of it."

There, that matter dropped. I afterwards saw Mrs. Chapman, who I knew had been a member of that Society. She said she distinctly remembered the circumstance of Dr. Follen's prayer, and added that it was a circumstance which ~~had~~ made a very deep impression on her sister Ann - (her husband's sister, I believe since deceased.)

You will have noticed that a Committee was appointed to prepare a Protest against Slavery, for the signatures of our Unitarian Ministers. As you were on the Committee, I presume you have had some communication on the subject. A Sub-Committee was to meet in Boston a fortnight or more since, and commence action. I wrote to them, briefly, my idea as to ~~the~~ what the Protest should be. I hope you did, I have heard nothing of their doings as yet.

The N. E. Antislavery Convention, at its closing Meeting, was broken up by some of the noisiest rowdies I ever fell among. If I had the management of such meetings, I should feel culpable, after I had invited people there to hear an discussion of Slavery, if I did not provide a police force, if there was a prospect (as there was here of a disturbance, to protect them against the noise, brutality and perils of such a godless rabble. Ten constables would have set all right (in my judgment, right) in 15 minutes

Ms. A. 6. 1. 21



The Meeting at Marlboro' Chapel on Capital Punishment  
was a grand one - nobly attended - and carried through with  
spirit, and, I am sure, with great effect. We had excellent  
speeches from Wm. H. Channing, Horace Greeley, Addison Davis,  
John Pierpont, Caleb Stetson, George W. Briggs, E. H. Chapin,  
Robert Rantoul Jr., & Wendell Phillips. The latter made a  
most brilliant speech - as who can do that, more surely  
than he? God defend the Right!

I have hardly room to say a word of domestic  
matters. We are as well as usual, and send our  
best love & sympathies, & heartiest good wishes to our  
Syracusan Cousins, one & all. I hope your baby is as good, and  
as agreeable, as ours. More I could hardly ask. He enjoys  
fine health & spirits. His name is Joseph Russell. He was  
not christened till yesterday. J. E. M. is a jewel, I doubt not.

I hope you will have good success with your Orphan  
Asylum, and with every other good work.

Let me hear from you before a great while.

And with renewed assurance of love to you,

I am, Yours,

Samuel May, Junr.

To, Rev. Samuel J. May.  
Syracuse, N. Y.



Rev. Samuel J. May.  
Syracuse,  
N. Y.

Sam. May Jr  
June 23. 1845